

THE TREASURE HUNTby Mai Abdo (*Abdomai984@gmail.com*)

Turning a simple reading text into an exciting activity for a large heterogeneous class was not easy at all. Yet the outcome was so fruitful that all of the exhaustion caused by the preparation simply turned into pride and fulfillment. I told my 6th graders that a reading text on treasure hunts will become a reality, and this made them so excited that it became the talk of the school and the parents. Preparation for the treasure hunt took four tedious hours because I made sure that the clues or hints were appropriate for all the students. In addition, I had to do some deep thinking about hiding places, and I wanted the treasure hunt to include all language skills.

The day of the treasure hunt came, and with it the excitement of the lovely 6th graders – and, to my great surprise, the teachers who wanted to leave their classes to join the hunt. The students were divided into groups with four or fewer in each group. I hid the clues in different places: inside the school, in the garden and on the playground. Ten envelopes lay on a table, one for each group, and each group had to go through each clue, one at a time. Once the group managed to solve the first clue and give it to the teacher, they were given the next clue. The students were given different aids, including iPads, in order to use the online dictionary. In order to spice up the game, each group was given ten credits with which to start. If the students chose to take the easy path and ask the teacher to explain the clue instead of using the dictionary, they would lose one credit card. (Each question directed to the teacher is worth one credit.) However, if the group managed to answer their worksheets correctly, with good handwriting, they would be given a credit. The worksheets varied from crossword puzzles to small reading texts with different kinds of questions. The following are examples of some of the clues.

Group One

Clue Four

Hello Raneem, Khadija and Marah M.!

At the entrance to the school, there is a door. Look for your file on that door. Take it and write down the answers on the worksheets. For one worksheet, you have to use Google. When you get them back, you will get one credit and your 5th clue.

Group Two

Clue Three

Dear Nuran, Banan and Sarah,

The teacher has hidden me in a very scary place that people usually use to boil water and make hot drinks. This thing has been placed under a bench in the playground. Please come and fetch me and answer the questions that I have. Do hurry up because I am scared.

Group Three

Clue One

Dear Maya, Shahd and Mais,

For this worksheet, you need first to find the scissors and the glue. You will find them in a small bag in one of the playgrounds. When you find the bag, go to your teacher and say to her, "I have found the bag, and now I need to get the paper to cut the pictures, after which I will paste the pictures in their right places."

Group Four

Clue One

Dear Ratal, Tasneem and Sarah,

There are three lovely worksheets with your names waiting in a file for you. The file can be found on the first floor on the red door. Find the file and answer the worksheets. Bring them back to your teacher, and if they are all correct, you will get one credit and your second clue.

Group One

Hello, Raneem, Khadija and Marah M.!

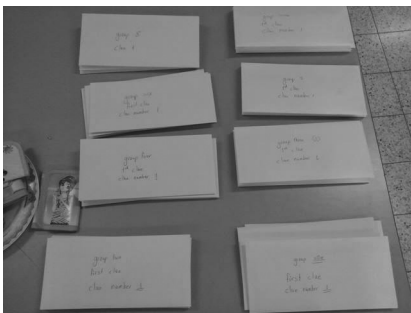
You have worked hard to get to your 8th clue, so now you will take an easy task. Go to the playground and look for the red shoe box. In the red shoe box, you will find some funky glasses. Do not touch them. Look for the hair clip and get it ASAP.

Of course, you have to know the meaning of ASAP.

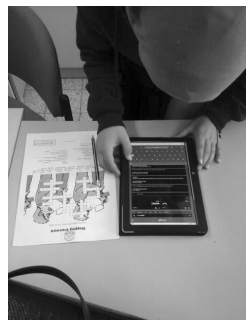
You can use the dictionary to do so. Good luck!

The students were given the freedom to choose their sitting places to answer the worksheets. Some chose to sit in the class, others in the garden, while others chose the playground. The competition between them was tough and fun at the same time. All the groups wanted to be the first to get to the final clue. They had fun and enjoyed the reading tasks and questions more than any other activity. They worked together and cooperated to get the work done as quickly as possible. Moreover, they were encouraged to use the English language instead of their mother tongue.

One important point to take into consideration was the different levels of the students. Each group had an activity suitable for each member in that specific group. This way, all of the students had the feeling of importance, and their self-esteem was boosted when they realized that they had an important role to play in their team.



Clues arranged in envelopes for the groups, with ten clues for each group



Student using the Internet to look for information



Working together as a team to try to solve the clue



Clues hidden in different places

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